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ABSTRACT

Findings from 20 interviews conducted with individuals involved in the California New Teacher Project, which is administered by the California Department of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, are reported to assess the policy environment for new teacher support and assessment programs. The study was conducted by the Southwest Regional Laboratory (California). Persons interviewed included legislative staff, Department of Education staff, Department of Finance staff, representatives of educational interest groups, and policy analysts. Changes in the policy environment for new teacher support and assessment programs since the program began in the fall of 1988 are summarized. The interview process and subsequent analysis are also described. The open-ended interviews were tailored to deduce issues of concern to interviewees. Interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses and the necessity for follow-up questions. The inductive analysis of interview notes illuminated the extent of support for the program, state funding, roles of local educational agencies and institutions of higher education, integration of the program into the state comprehensive staff development program and the California Mentor Teacher Program, licensure and tenure issues, and instruction of ethnolinguistically diverse students by predominantly Anglo teachers. (TJH)

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The Policy Environment for New Teacher Support and Assessment In California

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THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR NEW TEACHER SUPPORT AND ASSESSMENT IN CALIFORNIA

The California New Teacher Project (CNTP), established by Senate Bill 148, is designed to test alternative models of new teacher support and assessment to identify practices and policies that will ensure the retention of effective beginning teachers. The results of the three-year pilot will be reported to the state legislature in 1992 by the agencies responsible for administering the CNTP, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).

CDE and CTC asked the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) to study the California policy environment for new teacher support and assessment programs in response to educational, legislative, and fiscal changes in California that have occurred since fall 1988, the start of the CNTP. The state agencies were particularly interested in gathering information about how these changes have affected the views of key policy makers, policy analysts, and educational interest groups about the importance and design of new teacher support and assessment programs.

This paper presents the findings from 20 interviews SWRL staff conducted with individuals from five groups: (a) legislative staff, (b) Department of Education staff, (c) Department of Finance staff, (d) representatives of educational interest groups, and (e) policy analysts. The report begins with a summary of the changes in the policy environment for new teacher support and assessment programs since the CNTP began in fall 1988. Next is a discussion of the interview process and the way in which SWRL analyzed the interview responses. The study's findings are discussed after that. The paper concludes with reflections on the usefulness of studies of the policy environment for specific programs.

Key Changes in the Policy Environment

Since the CNTP was implemented in fall 1988, two key fiscal changes have occurred: California voters passed Proposition 98, which ensured a steady level of funding for eduction, and California experienced a budget crisis. At the same time, the state's educational reform agenda evolved, a new governor was elected, and Proposition 140 requiring limits on the terms of legislators and the numbers of staff members serving them was passed. Each development that affects the policy environment for new teacher support

and assessment is summarized below to provide a context for the specific questions addressed in the study. The order in which they are presented does not indicate their importance. Indeed, the individuals who were interviewed differed in their views of the importance of the changes.

Proposition 98

The passage of Proposition 98 in November 1988 caused a major change in the education policy environment. Although it altered the accountability structure for elementary and secondary schools by requiring the School Accountability Report Card, its major effect on the policy atmosphere for new teacher support programs was its direction for state fiscal policy. Proposition 98 designates a specific level of funding for schools and community colleges within whatever level of resources come into the state General Fund. Educational interest groups who originally supported the proposition believed the level of funding would represent a funding floor and there would be opportunities for additional funds for specific programs. However, the budget crisis of 1990 and the actions of the Governor, who attempted to manipulate the funding requirements of Proposition 98, led to Proposition 98 representing a funding ceiling. Governor Pete Wilson, who took office in 1991, has called for suspension of Proposition 98, claiming the need for budget flexibility to deal with the fiscal crisis and the effects of the drought and recession.

The Budget Crisis

The Governor and the legislature had great difficulty in passing a budget for 1990-91 largely because California faced a $3.6-billion budget deficit. The deficit and his ongoing arguments with the Superintendent of Public Instruction led the Governor to treat the educational funding guarantee of Proposition 98 as a ceiling, not a floor. The budget battle over education led to the governor's challenging the cost of living (COLA) increases for local districts in order to fund reduction in class size and to his eliminating the California Assessment Program. The budget battles of the summer of 1990 raised a number of questions about funding mechanisms for programs supporting new teachers and the potential for maintaining support in competition with other desirable programs. Many believe Proposition 98 and the budget crisis combine to create a "zero-sum game" for education programs, in which programs must compete for a fixed amount of funds in a situation in which one program's gain necessitates another's loss. As the fiscal crisis continued into

1991, the Governor submitted a budget that included a one-year moratorium on the Mentor Teacher Program as well as other funding cuts for education.

The Education Reform Agenda

California has been at the forefront of educational reform throughout the 1980s. The reform agenda has evolved in response to the effects of the original education reform efforts initiated in the early 1980s and to alterations in the concerns of educators and the public. The core focus on developing and implementing challenging curriculum frameworks has grown to include movement toward a holistic approach to professional development and the decentralization of decision making.

One effort in the movement toward holistic teacher development is the CNTP. Other measures include the California Mentor Teacher Program, the Staff Development Bill (Senate Bill 1882), and the state's Professional Development Program. This last effort includes Subject Matter Projects, such as the California Writing Project and the California Mathematics Project.

The New Governor

In November, 1990, Pete Wilson, U.S. Senator from California and a Republican was elected to succeed George Deukmejian, also a Republican, who could not succeed himself. Continued Republican control of the governorship with legislative control in the hands of the Democrats will continue the strains between the legislative and executive branches. Further, Bill Honig, elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, espouses a different set of political commitments than does the governor. However, Wilson began his term with gestures of reconciliation toward Honig so the tension between the California Department of Education and the executive branch may well be lower than it was during the previous administration. Wilson has espoused programs that emphasize "prevention" of educational problems rather than later treatment, but he has also proposed eliminating the California Mentor Teacher Program.

Proposition 140

Although not specifically related to education, Proposition 140, passed in November 1991 will have profound effects on the continuation of the educational reform agenda. First, Prop

140 requires term limitations for legislators. Consequently, legislators with long-term commitments to educational reform in general and particular actions within the reform agenda are slated to leave the legislature. In the short term, the second requirement of Prop 140 may have even greater effects on continuation of the CNTP. That requirement limits legislative staffs. Already, two of the four staff members interviewed for this study have left their positions. As a result, the number of legislative aides knowledgeable about and committed to support for new teachers within the context of educational reform has diminished. In addition, the increased work load of legislative staff will decrease their ability to become immersed in any given issue and will lead to greater reliance on interest groups. The Speaker of the Assembly is organizing a court challenge to Prop 140.

Conclusion

The combined effect of the changes in the policy environment is an atmosphere in which it is a challenge to achieve consensus about specific education programs, particularly those that do not provide direct services to students. As a result of the state's fiscal problems and political turbulence, it is difficult to include the favorite programs of all legislators, civil servants, and interest groups in the reform agenda. Consequently only programs that are seen as essential to improving student outcomes will receive continued attention and funding.

Study Methodology

SWRL designed the study of the policy environment for new teacher support and assessment with the CDE and CTC. State-level staff identified key policy makers, policy analysts, and representatives of educational interest groups for SWRL to interview. SWRL was able to interview 20 of the 23 individuals identified. Of the 20, in one case the original person identified requested that SWRL interview someone on his staff who knew more about new teacher support and assessment, and in another, the interviewee asked an additional staff member to sit in on the conversation. Staff from the CDE and/or the CTC were present at two interviews.

The open-ended interviews, which were tailored to elicit responses from the interviewees about issues of concern to them, ranged from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses and the necessity for follow-up and clarifying questions. The prepared interview schedule served as a guide, but the interviews followed the logic and concerns of the respondents without adhering strictly to the schedule. When the discussions

strayed, the interviewer returned the focus to the CTC- and CDE-selected issues. Table 1 lists the individuals interviewed by category.

Table 1

Individuals Interviewed

Legislative staff	Department of Education staff	Department of Finance staff	Educational interest groups	Policy analysts
Linda Bond,[a] Senate Education Committee	Jim Smith, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Leadership	Bob Harris	Mary Bergen, California Federation of Teachers	James Guthrie, Policy Analysis for California Education
Margie Chisholm, staff to Senator Morgan	Fred Tempes, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Support Services	Frank Schultz	Davis Campbell, California School Boards Association	Judith Warren Little, University of California, Berkeley
Gary Jerome,[a] staff to Senator Burgeson			Deborah Edginton and Ruthmary Cordon-Cradler, California Teachers Association	David Marsh, University of Southern California
Julie Rosado, Assembly Committee on Education			Bill Lambert, United Teachers of Los Angeles	Allen Odden, Policy Analysis for California Education
Bill Whiteneck, Senate Committee on Education			Melinda Melendez, Association of California School Administrators	
			Jan Mendelsohn, California State University	

[a]CTC and/or CDE staff were present at these interviews.

Analysis. The analysis of the interview notes was inductive. That is, themes were identified and particular comments noted. The themes originally identified were categorized and those that were conceptually similar were merged. For example, although there were separate questions about the curriculum frameworks and school restructuring, respondents discussed the two issues together. Consequently, the two themes were merged. These themes, framed as policy questions, form the organizational structure of this report. Given the tailoring of the interview questions and the open-ended nature of the conversations, not all respondents addressed the same issues. Indeed, one measure of the salience of a policy issue is whether the issue was raised during the interview. This inductive analytic technique has been recommended for studies that are qualitative in nature.[1]

Key Questions Addressed

The following questions were formulated based on the inductive analytic technique used to analyze the interview responses.

- To what extent do policy makers, educational interest groups, and policy analysts support programs of new teacher support?
- What is the likelihood that the State of California will fund programs that provide new teacher support and assessment?
- What should be the institutional base for new teacher support programs? In particular, what should be the respective responsibilities of local education agencies and institutions of higher education?
- Should new teacher support programs be integrated with the state's comprehensive staff development program (SB 1882)?
- Should new teacher support programs be integrated with school restructuring and the state's curriculum reform programs?
- Should new teacher support programs be integrated with the California Mentor Teacher Program?

[1]Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. (2nd edition). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

- Should new teacher performance assessment for licensure or tenure be tied to new teacher support?
- Should local education agencies be mandated to provide support to new teachers?
- What is the appropriate mix of programs that will prepare the state's predominantly Anglo new teachers to teach ethnolinguistically diverse student populations and train a more ethnolinguistically diverse teaching force?

Findings related to these policy questions are discussed below. One overarching finding was that there were not communities of agreement on a series of questions. That is, if two individuals agree on an answer to one question, it does not mean they agree on all answers. The lack of "camps" related to new teacher support provides an opportunity for the CDE and the CTC to build consensus through discussion and negotiation.

Support for Programs of New Teacher Support

Although there was almost universal approval for for new teacher support programs within the context of educational reform, respondents viewed new teacher support as only one of a number of activities that needs to take place to improve education.

Most of those interviewed, with the notable exception of the Department of Finance staff, believed that providing new teacher support was important within a larger framework. One expression of this view from a legislative staff member was:

> New teacher support is one of a number of activities. When people think about it, it's in terms of a constellation of changes that needs to occur to support professionalism and higher-quality teaching. It's important in the context of other things--the whole system.

Another legislative aide said, "Over the last eight years, there's been a growing sensitivity to the idea that one-third of the teachers aren't there after three to five years, and one-half aren't there after seven. However, other issues also get involved in how people think about new teacher support."

Among educational interest groups and most policy analysts, there was general agreement that new teachers need assistance that focuses on the problems they experience because they

are novices. One interviewee said, "There are 'flash points' of need for training and support...within the first two or three years, particularly the first year, being one."

A more critical view of new teacher support was captured by a respondent from the Department of Education who said, "no one denies that it's a good thing, but [the issue] never really gained the urgency that some thought it would perhaps because teachers don't seem to be retiring at the high rates predicted."

A policy analyst asserted that the service delivery model upon which new teacher support is built argued for a different conception of teacher induction. The service delivery conception places teachers in a passive role and narrows the definition of teaching and schooling, it was claimed. Instead, in this view, teachers should be placed at the center of decision making. Under this conception, new and experienced teachers together should determine how the local system should respond to the demands placed on it by new teachers.

Finally, the negative view of state-funded programs to support new teachers was expressed by a Department of Finance representative in the following terms: Local districts would fund support for new teachers if, in fact, it was perceived as valuable. If they do not, it is because they do not see it as important to the education of children.

In sum, even the strongest advocates of new teacher support place it in the context of other educational improvement activities. Those who hold negative views, particularly in the Department of Finance, are unlikely to be convinced of the value of new teacher support. However, the effect of their opinions can be defused by integrating new teacher support with some other program(s). The integration would help advocates garner additional backers for new teacher support.

State Funding for New Teacher Support Programs

Under the current policy environment in Sacramento, it will be difficult for the Legislature to fund such programs. The governor's proposed 1992 budget makes funding for new teacher support even more unlikely than it was at the time of the study.

The most pessimistic prediction about this came from a policy analyst and was phrased in terms of lack of effective leadership from the Governor, legislature, or chief state school officer for continuing the education reform agenda, including support for new teachers, due

to the fiscal crisis, the upcoming struggles over reapportionment, and the backlash from Proposition 98.

The most optimistic response was based on a policy analyst's view that despite a general sense that education has not received sufficient funding, historically, the facts are just the opposite. His work indicates that even accounting for enrollment growth and inflation, funding for education increased 30% nationally during the 1980s. Based on this analysis, he suggested that funds will be available for new teacher support and assessment programs if new teacher support is part of a vision for educational improvement.

In the eyes of most of the respondents, Prop 98 and the budget crisis have combined to create a situation in which educational programs, for the first time, are in competition with one another for funding. According to one legislative staff member:

> Prior to 98, educators supported everything that brought money to schools. They didn't care who got the money--if it went to low wealth districts, that was okay; if it went to districts with declining enrollment, that was okay because it didn't take money from anyone else. But 98 is, in reality, a maximum for funding. So now the education community sees it as a zero-sum game and each wants money with no restrictions on it.

The same thought was expressed in two other ways. One representative of an interest group said, "All funding not directly related to the base is now vulnerable. There will be a constant battle around the margins, and many programs that were historically supported no longer can be without diluting the base funding."

Another education interest group member argued, "It's a matter of competing priorities. If it involves a shift in existing local education agency staff development funds or any other add-on money, no matter what the interest, it will compete with other priorities."

Despite the constraints imposed by Prop 98, the budget crisis, and what one respondent characterized as a "contentious atmosphere," there are funding mechanisms that might ensure support for new teachers. For example, one respondent suggested that funding become part of the distribution of the General Fund by directing districts to earmark some funds for new teacher support just as they are so directed about other activities.

Another interest group representative said, "There is a reasonable consensus that the idea of school-level support for new teachers is great. But no one wants to redirect resources." Under those circumstances, the interviewee proposed to draw money from a variety of sources so that no one felt that a single program had been "raided" for new teacher support activities. The funding sources suggested were the California Mentor Teacher Program for experienced teacher time; California State University funds for training activities; local staff development funds; and forgivable loans to new teachers. The new teachers would be required to use their forgivable loan funds to "buy" one-fourth of their time from the districts during which they would be released to receive training and support.

Within the current environment there is little change of receiving funding for an independent program of new teacher support. However, there was support for integrating new teacher support activities with some other educational program. The budget submitted by Governor Wilson makes it more complicated to determine the program or programs to which new teacher support should be tied given cuts in all areas and the moratorium on the Mentor Teacher Program.

The Institutional Base for New Teacher Support

Most respondents thought local education agencies should have primary responsibility for new teacher support and institutions of higher education should provide supplementary services.

State funds for new teacher support could be provided to local education agencies, institutions of higher education, other organizations with an interest in educational reform, or combinations of these. The question about the institutional base for new teacher support led to responses that raised issues about the conception of the program's purposes and its role in the educational reform agenda.

An argument was made by interest groups representatives and policy analysts that the current pilot program lacks clarity about its purposes, attempting to (a) provide a safety net so that first- and second-year teachers make it through a difficult time in a way that encourages them to stay in teaching and (b) build new teachers' capacities to work with students. Both purposes were seen as legitimate, but the appropriate institutional base would differ depending on the objective to be achieved. Under the first conception or the "survival" orientation, the respondents suggested that local education agencies could provide the safety

net with state support. However, if the program was designed to build the capacities of new teachers (and some would add, of the educational system), the respondents argued that the collaboration of a university is necessary and that the collaboration should not be left to happenstance. One policy analyst who supported this view identified the Subject Matter Projects, supported by the staff development act, as examples of successful capacity-building collaboration among institutions of higher education and local education agencies.

Even those who focused on capacity building believed that local education agencies should control the process. This idea was predicated on the concept that teachers' "newness" places demands on the local system that differ depending on how many new teachers there are. Furthermore, there are different kinds of newness, including newness to the profession, to a grade level or subject area, and to the world of work. This argument also suggests that local systems differ in their capacity to respond to any of these types of new experiences, and that the state's role is to increase the local capacity to respond to the demands.

In sum, conceptually, there can be different purposes for new teacher support programs. Given the two broad purposes mentioned by respondents, the institutional base for support activities should be local education agencies. However, respondents disagreed about the extent to which institutions of higher education should be involved, with their disagreements related to whether they saw new teacher support as providing a safety net or building capacity.

Comprehensive Staff Development

According to the respondents, with clear direction and supplemental funding, the state's comprehensive staff development program could be an appropriate base for new teacher support. However, there is little likelihood that supplemental funding will be available.

The disagreements about whether new teacher support should be integrated with the state's staff development program were related to respondents' conception of staff development. The line of reasoning for integrating new teacher support with the comprehensive staff development program views staff development as a career-long process within which the needs of new teachers can be addressed. In support of this, one Department of Education respondent focused on the role of staff development in the implementation of the new curriculum frameworks. In this view, the key reform issue to be addressed is to ensure that students receive instruction in the challenging curriculum adopted

by the state. Further, both new and experienced teachers need training in delivering the curriculum. Respondents, representing interest groups, the Department of Education, legislative staff, and policy analysts, who offered a variation of this argument recognized the special needs of new teachers (e.g., to learn how to manage their classrooms), but held that either reserving a small portion of current staff development funds or supplementing them would adequately address those needs.

Another theme that emerged was that a staff development program should be one source of money for new teacher support. This position, expressed by an interest group representative, reflects the belief that the state would have to use a number of programs to gather the money needed for new teacher support. Furthermore, pulling funds from a number of sources would avoid a fight for priority status in the tight budget arena and would distribute interest in and responsibility for support for new teachers, an effect that is seen as positive.

Alternatively, four arguments were offered against integrating new teacher support with staff development as the latter is currently is conceived. One of these, from a policy analyst, challenged the conception of staff development that defines new or experienced teacher development in terms of needs for training. Abandoning the training paradigm would allow new and experienced teachers to examine their practice and context together and develop professionally in a collegial manner.

Another argument against integrating new teacher support with comprehensive staff development was based on budgetary considerations. One interest group representative said, "The weakest way to look at new teacher support is as part of a life-long development opportunity because those programs are the first to go in a budget crunch."

Yet another argument expressed by interest group representatives and policy analysts rested on a belief in the existence of "flash points" of need for training and support within the first two or three years (particularly the first year). This belief was accompanied by the view that there must be special funding to support programs for teachers at the flash points or such programs would not be implemented.

Finally, an argument was made by interest group representatives that the comprehensive staff development program was not mature enough to take on the additional role of supporting new teachers, thereby providing them with sufficient assistance.

The professionals involved in the comprehensive staff development program, particularly in the subject matter projects, have a coherent perspective on educational reform. Working with them to include the special issues relevant to new teachers, such as concern for classroom management, might strengthen their approaches. On the other hand, including those concerns may dilute the focus of their efforts and decrease their effectiveness. The decision to integrate new teacher support with the comprehensive staff development program is, therefore, a complex one. The almost certain lack of supplemental funding may create an unsurmountable barrier.

School Restructuring and Curriculum Reform

Respondents were split over whether new teacher support fit into curriculum reform and school restructuring efforts. Even those who support such program integration, however, believed it would require supplemental funding, which is unlikely to be authorized.

There were two distinct perspectives on whether new teacher support activities should be integrated with curriculum reform and school restructuring. The differences rested on how respondents defined "teacher professionalism." From one perspective, expressed by legislative staff, Department of Education staff, interest group members, and policy analysts, moving decision making to the school site, implementing a curriculum that challenged teachers and students, and helping others into the profession are empowering activities that increase teacher professionalism. From this perspective, new teacher support, curriculum reform, and school restructuring are interrelated, so the programs should be integrated.

The second distinctive view held by other interest group members and policy analysts was that "professionalism" has different meanings when discussed in terms of curriculum reform or in the context of school restructuring. When the language of professionalism enters into curriculum reform discussions, it means increased teacher knowledge and skill; when it enters into restructuring discussions, it means political power to make administrative decisions. Within this framework, new teacher support is associated with curriculum reform--but not with school restructuring--and can be integrated into activities designed to improve the curriculum, while staying separate from restructuring programs.

The respondents who suggested those themes also argued that new teacher support requires special efforts. For example, in schools involved in restructuring, there is a need to

include new teachers on the decision making teams if their needs are to be considered. Consequently, if new teacher support were to be integrated with curriculum reform and/or school restructuring, it would be necessary to include guidelines and supplemental funding that ensure that attention is given to new teachers.

Answers to questions about curriculum reform and school restructuring revealed different concepts of what "professionalism in teaching" means. These differences lead to different views of whether new teacher support can be integrated into the restructuring program, in particular.

The California Mentor Teacher Program

At the time of the study, there was almost universal support for integrating new teacher support into the California Mentor Teacher Program. Given the moratorium on funding the Mentor Teacher Program proposed in the Governor's budget, there is doubt now about whether this proposal can be implemented.

The California Mentor Teacher Program is well-established. However, the program is implemented differently as determined by local education agencies, even though the key legislative focus is experienced teacher assistance to new teachers. This variation results in different levels and types of support to new teachers. Such differences prompted everyone to argue that refinements in the California Mentor Teacher Program would be necessary before new teacher support could be fully integrated into it.

There were different views, coming from all sectors, of how the California Mentor Teacher Program should be modified to ensure adequate support to new teachers. One theme focused on the amount of released time for mentor teachers to work closely with new teachers. Another was that mentor teachers should concentrate their assistance on new and experienced teachers when implementing the curriculum frameworks. According to this perspective, mentor teachers should become curriculum experts, most likely through participation in a Subject Matter Project, and offer their skills and knowledge to all teachers in the school. Still, an argument was made that mentor teachers' efforts along these lines should be supplemented to address the noncurriculum-related needs of new teachers, such as classroom management.

One interest group member suggested using California Mentor Teacher Program funds as one of a number of sources for funding new teacher support. However, another argued that districts with large numbers of new teachers would need funds in addition to California Mentor Teacher Program funds to provide adequate services. Alternatively, the state could appoint mentor teachers according to the number of new teachers in a district.

Finally, a case was made by a policy analyst to use mentor teachers as the core staff in a professional development school. Experienced teachers receive intensive and extensive staff development and new teachers are inducted into the profession in such a school. All of a district's new teachers would be assigned to the professional development school and assessed to determine whether they receive a license at the end of their time in the school. They then would transfer to another school as probationary teachers for two or three years, after which a tenure decision would be made.

One legislative staff member believed that the California Mentor Teacher Program poses a dilemma. That is, the state should leave flexibility to design and implement the California Mentor Teacher Program in the hands of the local districts and yet the best use of excellent teachers is as mentors to new teachers, and the state may need to be stronger in its push toward such use.

The Mentor Teacher Program, with appropriate refinement, could serve as the base for new teacher support activities. There are a variety of somewhat contradictory suggestions about what modifications should be made in the Mentor Teacher Program to ensure that new teachers receive adequate support leading to the need to build consensus about the appropriate changes and the balance between local control and state direction for new teacher support. Most important, the legislature must be convinced not to implement the proposed moratorium on the California Mentor Teacher Program if this proposal is to succeed.

New Teacher Performance Assessment

There was widespread agreement that teacher performance assessment for licensure or tenure should be separated from new teacher support.

There was universal support for linking formative assessment of new teachers' classroom performance to support to ensure that the support was actually relevant to new teachers'

needs. However, there was far less enthusiasm and much outright opposition to tying new teacher support and performance assessment to licensing and tenure.

The only argument that was made strongly for linking new teacher support and performance assessment was from the Department of Finance: "It is important to show that there is a process for getting rid of poor teachers because to the extent they remain in the classroom, they waste state and local funds."

Weak support for linking the two issues came from legislative staff in terms of political expediency. For example, the linkage "could get the attention of policy makers and could be a hook" to increase their interest in new teacher support. Further, "it's necessary because it's part of the rhetoric" of educational reform. Even such weak support was further diluted by agreement that educational organizations tend to oppose classroom performance assessment for licensing and tenure.

One argument made by educational interest groups against linking support and performance assessment rested on the assumption that the numbers of new teachers who would not be able to meet performance standards would be small. "The costs of developing a credible assessment system far outweigh the benefits when only 1/2 of 1% will be denied a license," said one respondent.

Another argument emphasized the complexity of determining a teacher's skill without acknowledging the effect of the context in which she or he teaches. One respondent from an interest group reasoned:

> When a teacher enters the system, she has two years to survive, thrive, or fail. So much depends on the first assignment, over which she might not have influence. Not all teachers can teach in every setting, nor should we expect them to. How can an administrator, or even other teachers, decide that she can teach, but just not here? It's almost an impossible choice. A teacher may fail in one instance, but thrive in another.

Finally, there were concerns about legal issues that might arise if support and performance assessment were linked. These concerns were expressed in terms of a hypothetical case of a teacher who was denied a license or tenure and claimed that the support she or he received was inadequate. To avoid such litigation the state would need to develop

standards for judging the adequacy of the support and a method for ensuring that those standards are met--a heavy bureaucratic burden.

In conclusion, although political arguments were advanced for linking new teacher support and assessment, there political arguments were also advanced against doing so. In the current environment, the linkage is not likely to result in strong programs for either new teacher support or assessment.

Mandated New Teacher Support

Unique in this study, there was unanimous opposition to requiring local education agencies to provide new teacher support. It reflected a general sense of "weariness" with specific program directives and a desire to move to a more holistic approach to educational improvement. In addition, passionate arguments were made that mandates interfered with the development of locally relevant responses to particular needs. Such arguments included discussions of why districts should provide different configurations of support in cases of schools with one new teacher as compared with schools with 10 new teachers.

State-provided incentives to districts that offered such support was suggested as an alternative. The incentive proposal rested on the beliefs that incentives tend to be less expensive than mandates and also generate fewer complaints. Again, the continuing fiscal crisis mitigates against the use of incentives.

Addressing Ethnolinguistic Diversity

Most respondents believed that new teacher support should continue to assist Anglo teachers to teach California's ethnolinguistically diverse student population, but that recruitment and training efforts are also necessary.

All of those interviewed strongly agreed that any new teacher support program must emphasize assistance in teaching California's diverse student population. Expressions of the agreement focused on student needs and the "culture shock" new teachers frequently experienced. An additional argument for the focus on the diverse student population was that a strong way to make the case for new teacher support would be look at the profiles of the students new teachers will teach and prepare the teachers for them. From one perspective, offered by a legislative staff member, however, there have been insufficient pilot projects

funded under the CNTP in urban areas and, as a result, educators would not receive sufficient information about the best ways to assist new teachers in schools serving large numbers of ethnolinguistically diverse students.

A related argument was that the state needed to recruit and train a more diverse teaching force in addition to helping new teachers achieve success with the diverse student population. From one point of view, recruitment should focus on ensuring that minority students attend and finish college. According to this view, expressed by legislative aides, educators should work with members of other professions, e.g., law, medicine, and engineering, to develop college recruitment programs.

Finally, one legislative staff member admonished that too much focus on assisting Anglo teachers to teach minority students and recruiting minority teachers could result in a backlash. The backlash, the respondent contended, would be the result of a lack of awareness of the teaching challenges that stem from the rapidly changing demographics of California and the resulting inference--that Anglos are not capable of teaching new student populations.

Summary

The findings of any policy environment study reflect the influences at work at a particular time. This study was undertaken at the end of and immediately following a legislative session in which the state's fiscal problems affected thinking about a broad range of issues. Serious tensions between the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction also influenced the environment. Further, this study was done toward the end of a heated race for Governor and the education priorities of the gubernatorial candidates were not known.

Within the policy environment in California at the time of the study, there was broad but fairly passive agreement that the state should support and assess new teachers. Further, there was a general feeling that state-funded education programs not directly involving students are--and will be--in competition with one another. The competition among programs may well exacerbate differences among educational interest groups and create strains in the education coalition. As such, new teacher support and assessment is most likely to be implemented statewide if it is cast as a supplement to some related effort that already has widespread acceptance. Among the candidate programs were the curriculum improvement efforts, the California Mentor Teacher Program, school restructuring, and staff development.

This study reveals not only the generally positive views about streamlining these reform programs, but also reveals a myriad of views about the desirability of hooking new teacher support to any one of them.

However, there was little sense of urgency for new teacher support. Despite agreement among legislative staff, educational interest groups, and policy analysts that new teacher support is desirable, few gave it a high enough priority to ensure even supplemental funding within another program, particularly when funding for educational programs is seen as a zero-sum game. The sense of urgency could be increased in a number of ways. First, teacher supply and demand data can demonstrate the need for capable new teachers. Second, the successes of new teacher support programs in retaining teachers, particularly in difficult settings, can be highlighted. Third, benefits to students can be emphasized, particularly to poor and minority students with whom schools have historically been unsuccessful.

Although the CNTP is exploring alternative new teacher support approaches as well as alternative assessment procedures for beginning teachers, findings from this study of the policy environment indicate that support and assessment for licensing purposes should be separated in any statewide policy that may result from the CNTP.

Reflections

The CDE and CTC requested the study of the policy environment for new teacher support and assessment so that they could better understand the dynamic they will confront as the pilot stage of the CNTP ends and they make recommendations for future new teacher support activities. The CTC and CDE are required to report the results of the evaluation of the CNTP to the legislature and governor by March 1, 1992.

The study of the policy environment was initiated in the summer of 1991, coinciding with difficult negotiations over the state budget, and concluded just prior to the gubernatorial election. The turbulent policy environment (Emery & Trist, 1965)[2] affected the interviews as they were being performed. Since then, the environment regarding new teacher support has become increasingly turbulent. The Governor's decision not to include the Mentor Teacher Program in the 1992 budget, in particular, challenges program staff in new ways to fit new teacher support into the educational reform agenda.

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[2] Emery, F. & Trist, E. (1965). The causal texture of organizational environments. *Human Relations, 18, 21-31.*

Under the most positive circumstances, working with the Mentor Teacher Program staff and educational interest groups to ensure that adjustments were made in the Mentor Teacher Program to accommodate new teacher needs would have required negotiation and attention to the competing interests of various educational groups. This is because the Mentor Teacher Program is "claimed" by different groups and serves multiple purposes. For example, mentor teachers are seen by the Subject Matter Projects as important to the successful implementation of improved curriculum and instruction in the areas they address; by local teacher associations as creative, self-defining professionals; by local administrator associations as examples of how steady and consistent work can be rewarded; and by legislators as providing assistance to new teachers. Each of these is a legitimate purpose for providing supplementary funding and release time to a limited number of excellent teachers, but it is difficult to imagine the same teacher serving all the functions simultaneously. In current practice, the particular emphasis of the Mentor Teacher Program is resolved locally. The moratorium means that there may well be competition on both the state and local levels for whatever funds--and symbols--are available to achieve the variety of purposes formerly addressed by the Mentor Teacher Program. Advocates of the centrality of new teacher support will need to make an even stronger case now than they would have prior to the submission of the Governor's budget.

Some guidance about how best to make the strong case could come from the interviews performed prior to the election. That is, each respondent revealed the logical (and sometimes empirical) base for his or her views. Those bases could be analyzed and information supplied that would demonstrate the importance of new teacher support to each. Further, given the overlapping concerns of respondents from the different groups, state staff could find the common areas and help build an active consensus for new teacher support. Indeed, at the end of the study, that was the assumption about how the information would be used.

But the turbulent policy environment calls into question the effectiveness of such a strategy. Although the impact of the fiscal crisis is great, perhaps the longest and most profound impact on state policy making will be from the effects of Proposition 140, which limits the terms of state legislators and the size of legislative staffs. Already, two of the four individuals interviewed from the legislative side have left their positions, and those who remain will be dealing with more issues than education. The interviews cast new teacher support within the context of <u>educational</u> reform--as staff take on more issues, the focus

should shift to finding out how particular education programs stack up against not only other educational programs but those other issues. The case for funding new teacher support will need to be made within a larger context, and greater attention will need to be given to the increasing role of interest groups and lobbyists.

In sum, the study reported here was probably conducted too soon. Given the 1992 reporting date and the turbulence in the state policy environment, it offers good, but rapidly dated advice. If conducted this year, the questions addressed and the individuals interviewed would be different, and the responses more relevant to the needs of the state.

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